www.worldrevolution.org.uk

REVOLUTION
socialist youth movement

Issue 98 | November 09

Keep our cities fascist free

SMASH THE EDL

Inside: Troops out of Afghanistan • Report of Manchester anti-EDL demo • Victory to the posties • What's wrong with city academies • Austrian students occupy unis • Stop the cutbacks, make the rich pay! • Fight for the right to work...

Afghanistan: Get the troops out now

BY STEPHEN * NORTHAMPTON

Afghanistan, now often called "the unwinnable war", started with controversy and continues to cause it to this very day.

The occupying powers like Britain and America try to hide behind claims of morality but increasingly, more and more people are seeing it for what it really is - an act of imperialism to conquer energy resources. The war has dragged on far too long, and for every child that dies, another is pushed into the arms of the Taleban.

As we go to press, the media has focussed on the cut backs and poor safety measures that allowed the Nimrod helicopter to crash, killing 14 British soldiers. Army generals are pleading for more government money for better equipment. But this misses the point -they shouldn't be there at all. The only way to stop both British soldiers and Afghan people dying is to bring them home immediately.

Some people say that it would cause chaos if the troops were pulled out. But when villages and towns are suffering constant bombardment, the country has a president who rigged the election to secure his control, and has passed laws legalising rape in marriage, then how could the situation get worse? Imperialism doesn't bring democracy or freedom to people, only suffering. This is why we support the right of any Afghans fighting the occupiers, and aim to come to the head of any resistance movement to turn it into a movement for socialism.

So it's time to reject the media campaign that is trying to whip up nationalism to recruit more of us to fight and die for a war that is not ours. We will take to the streets to stop those who try to use the wars in Asia and the Middle East to justify attacks on Muslims, like the fascist English Defence League and the BNP. We say that not a penny nor a person should be spent on the war effort - spend money on schools, hospitals and decent jobs instead.

Contents

Page 3
Report: demonstration against the EDL in Manchester

Page 4
• Victory to the posties!

Page 5
• City academies – profiteering out of our futures

Page 6
• The cutbacks are looming, get ready to fight!

Page 7
• Students occupying Austrian universities

Page 8
• Fight for the right to work!

Manchester – EDL win the battle but not the war

BY KADY * LEEDS MET

On October 10th, the fascist English Defence League brought their message of hatred and racism to Piccadilly Gardens in central Manchester. At their previous attempts to demonstrate in Birmingham and Harrow, they were humiliated and driven off the streets by militant mobilisations of white, black and asian youth.

Sadly this time it was different. The counter-demonstration of anti-fascists was much bigger, however a lack of central organisation and communication meant that the large number of anti-fascists were unable to chase the EDL scum off the streets. As much as the counter-protest was larger in number, so was the fascist contingent. Due to lack of communication around 300 fascists were allowed to march into the gardens and hold a rally complete with 'No More Mosques' placards, sieg heils, and racist chants. For several hours around 1500 anti-fascists confronted them, separated by 20 yards and several hundred police with horses and dogs.

There were attempts by Revolution, younger members of Unite Against Fascism (UAF) and the Socialist Workers Party to breach the police lines, to motivate the crowd physically confront them and driving them off the streets. However these attempts were beaten back with massive police violence; using batons on unarmed demonstrators and mauling them with police dogs. If the whole demo had tried to force its way through the police we could have stopped the fascists, but the UAF leadership persisted in holding a 'peaceful rally' with speakers while several hundred fascists stood just yards away.

The final nail in the coffin for anti-fascists on Saturday was when an EDL feeder march was allowed to join the fascists in Piccadilly Gardens, more than doubling their numbers, without any interference from the demonstration - despite them marching just feet away from us.

Smash the English Defence League...

The fascist English Defence League have launched a campaign to drive up racist violence in our towns and cities.

Exploiting a nationalist drive by the media and government to justify the failed war in Afghanistan, the EDL aim to get the hundreds of thousands of people that voted for the BNP in the European elections onto our streets in racist marches.

They started their campaign against British Muslims in peripheral towns like Luton and Harrow, and Birmingham where the far-right is small. But this was to build up publicity for moving into major cities where the BNP have significant areas of support – in Manchester and Leeds.

Antifascists in Birmingham and Harrow showed how we can stop them, and it's just as well. If the EDL successfully march in Leeds and Manchester, racism and fascism will be given the green light all across the UK.

It's up to all of us to stop the EDL where ever they march – by any means necessary. We need an Antifascist Defence League – to protect our communities, and keep our towns and cities fascist-free.

...by any means necessary

Revo vs EDL in Mancs.
Pic: Haleema

Manchester was a success for the EDL - their previous attempts to march have seen them chased off the streets by militant youth. Anti-fascists should use this model; mobilising young people and workers for a direct confrontation with fascists for future actions. The strategy of peaceful rallies which allow the fascists march is a failure and does not stop the fascists mobilising and growing. The demonstration was noticeable for the small numbers of black and asian youth, who had played such a vital role in Birmingham and Harrow. This is was due to a police campaign in collusion with community leaders to scare young people away from the demonstration, however UAF failed to respond to this by trying to organise young people independently of religious and community leaders.

The UAF leadership on Saturday failed to rise to its responsibilities, it allowed the community leaders and police to prevent the mass mobilisation of working-class youth needed to drive the fascists off the streets of Manchester. It is vital that all genuine anti-fascists organise not just to protest against the EDL demonstrations, but to stand in the spirit of Birmingham and Harrow by smashing their demonstrations and driving them out of our town . We need to build an anti-fascist defence league which unites the tens of thousands of militant workers and youth who hate the fascists and want to drive them out

Victory to the posties!

MARK FROM SOUTH LONDON * DOWNLOAD AS A LEAFLET FROM OUR WEBSITE

Being a postal worker is a tough job. It means getting up at the crack of dawn, working long shifts and carrying back-breaking amounts of mail. To make matters worse for the last 6 months Royal Mail management has been pushing through attacks on posties working conditions and pay. Across the country workers have been transferred from day to night shifts, full timers have had their hours and pay cut by as much as 40% and tens of thousands are being threatened with the sack.

Why are these attacks taking place? The government and Royal Mail executives are pushing through a steady plan to privatise the postal industry. They have already allowed private, super-exploiting companies like TNT to deliver the lucrative business mail, breaking Royal Mail's monopoly. It's the pressure to "modernise" and make Royal Mail "profitable" that is being used by the bosses to justify these terrible attacks on posties.

To do this they need to destroy the hard-won protections postal workers have, and smash their union, the CWU. This postal dispute isn't just about the postal service. It is also about the whole future of our public services in general. The government has given over £1.5 trillion pounds to the banks to bail them out of the economic crisis, and is now hundreds of billions of pounds in debt. In order to get that money back the goverment are planning massive cuts to all our public service – the NHS, schools, universities, firefighters, social services, local government and the civil service.

The postal workers are in the frontline of resisting this plan. They have a strong union, are well organised and can paralyse the economy by stopping the post moving. That is why the government and Royal Mail are intent on smashing the CWU before they attack other public services.

The posties fight is a fight for all workers. We are being made to pay for the crisis through pay cuts, unemployment and cuts to our services, while the rich live well off the billions of pounds of public money the government gave them. They are fighting back and refusing to be made to pay. They deserve our total support.

What you can do

1. Visit your local picket line on the day of the strike
2. Hand out this leaflet at your school, college and university
3. Hand round a petition and collect donations for the striking posties
4. See if your student union (or union branch) will send the posties a message of support
5. Organise a meeting, put up posters round your college - invite a postie and us
6. Organise a stunt or rally in your local town centre to raise support for the posties (contact us for help pulling this

Some young workers, unemployed or earning the minimum wage, may think posties are well-off compared to them. But with families and mortgages and a massive workload, they are not well off at all. And if the posties lose, the attacks against us will become even fiercer.

Young workers are being scandalously exploited and then discarded on the unemployment scrapheap. We urgently need to fight for their rights too. When we do militant trade unionists, like the posties, will be our allies.

A victory for one lot of workers against the bosses, will be a victory for all. By building strong unions, with a well organised and militant rank and file, we can launch a fight back against the cuts in the public services and against the crippling unemployment which is destroying the future of millions of young people. Solidarity campaigns that unite public sector workers with students and young workers, can kick off

City academies: selling us to the rich

BY ALEX * BOLTON

The government target of turning 200 schools into academies has come a year ahead of plan. Labour isn't trying to hide the fact that it's prepared to turn valuable rights such as education into commodities in the hands of private business. At the same time state schools are suffering budget cuts and the money they lose is used to cushion the bosses' when their profits fall.

The government claims that schools are run better when they become academies, pointing to improvements in behaviour. If you look at the charts and statistics this may well be true, but the reality is very different. Simply put - if you step out of line you're dealt with far more severely. If you don't meet their expectations, then you get kicked out. Behaviour may be artificially "better" but students will suffer because of it. It's a very disheartening process, constantly being told what to do and reprimanded when you fail to follow orders to the word.

Rebecca, a student in an Oasis academy, told REVOLUTION what it was like to be a student there:

"Education has definitely changed since our school became an academy. Instead of concentrating on education, they're more bothered about stupid things like our appearance. The school has also become stricter on unimportant things - the behaviour of the students hasn't actually changed. For example, if you haven't got part of your uniform, record book or writing equipment then you get sent home to get it, and you have to make up the time you missed in detention at the end of the day.

The amount of "bad behaviour" in the school hasn't really changed, it's just that now they try and pretend that there isn't any. So now, they make a big show of having all these different ways of disciplining people just to try and scare us into line.

Teachers strike against academies in Tamworth

They've also come up with a lot of new rules that over-complicate things. If your uniform is not absolutely perfect they make you fix every detail. You can't wear coats or gloves going in to the bathroom from outside even if you're going back out again, you have to take them off to walk five feet down a corridor and back.

Areas of the school have even been fenced off to pupils now. You can't go in the building, even if it's freezing cold - all the students are crammed into one small yard. They've wasted so much time and money that could've gone on our education on stupid things. These new fences make us late for lessons, wasting time where we could've been doing something useful, and then when we're late we're punished.

But I think the worst thing is that they don't even give us a reason for doing all of this. They treat you as if you're not even a person, it's unfair. They pen us in and remove our individuality just as if we're livestock to be dealt with and not human beings - and then don't even tell us why! School wasn't my favourite place in the world to begin with, but it's horrible now it's an academy."

As academies are run by businesses, they have their own targets to meet. A business wants to produce the next generation of servile workers who do what they're told without question, and so an academy is run as ruthlessly efficient as possible. Such is the way an academy is run that there's no room left for individuality or creativity. A school is supposed to be a place where you can learn, grow and express yourself as an individual, but business doesn't care for individuality and expression. So pupils in academies aren't presented with essential opportunities to develop their creativity, often with grave consequences for the individual.

Academies aren't under the jurisdiction of local authorities. Instead of the school being run by people with the knowledge and experience to do so, they're controlled by company executives and bosses. This often means that the pupils aren't receiving the best possible education and aren't realising their full potential...

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

The Anti Academies Alliance is an umbrella organisation of teachers, staff, trade unions and parents which campaigns against city academies for many of the reasons expressed in this article. Their website is a very good source of information with campaigning materials to fight the city academies.

You can visit their website at: www.antiacademies.org.uk

...CONTINUED

Also, academies don't have to follow the national rules on education. This means that the business that runs the academy can do what it wants. In many instances they want to extend the working day at academies. Apart from being unfair, this could and will have a bad effect on the students and teachers who have commitments outside of schools.

It's not just the pupils who have a hard time in academies, but the teachers as well. The private sector is renowned for its lack of democracy and its anti-union outlook. Because of this, teachers have no say in how the school is run - meaning they have to work in conditions that they may not like.

It's obvious, then, that academies cannot benefit ordinary people, just rich company bosses. Turning a school into an academy isn't a way of improving the school, instead it makes it worse. The only way to improve a school is by letting the teachers and pupils decide themselves what they want to do - it's their education and their jobs, who else would be better at deciding what's best than the people it affects?

The only way we can stop the government from stealing our education is by actively resisting the proposals for even more academies. Students and teachers need to organise and fight back against the government's plans to carry on privatising our schools and education. Schools need to be run under the democratic control of pupils and teachers, not private businesses.

Read more about the academies scandal in an article by Kady on our website: http://tinyurl.com/yk5kecs

ANTICAPITALISM

the capitalist crisis and the working class resistance

14-15 November 2009
Caxton House, London
(Archway tube)

An unmissable event for all those looking for answers to a world in crisis

For more details go to workerspower.com

Who will pay for the UK debt?

BY ELLIOT AND RACHEL * UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA

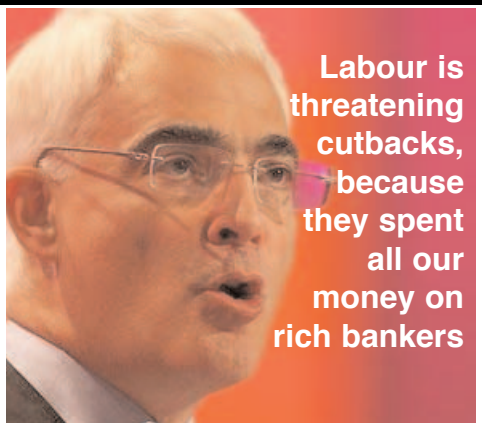
What will YOU lose? The general election is approaching fast, and a new British government will soon be chosen. But whoever it is, one thing will happen for sure - massive cuts.

If the Tories win we can expect thousands of people who provide us with our most vital services to lose their jobs, with more of our education and health handed over to private companies who put profit over need. Both Labour and the Lib Dems have made clear that we can still expect 'savage' cuts if either win.

A huge range of services are in danger, from local government, to health, to education. Cuts in these areas will hit everyone. It means fewer nurses on the wards of an already overstretched NHS, fewer teachers in schools where class sizes are already far from ideal and fewer refuse collectors, grass cutters, road workers to oil the gears of our cities.

Politicians blame the cuts on the recession, and the supposedly "necessary" bailout of the banks. But these cuts could be easily avoided if the rich paid their fair share.

Many companies in this country are still making billions in profits, but avoid paying the taxes they should. Methods such as offshore banking,



are used maximize company profits at our expense.

A well-known example is Richard Branson's Virgin Group, which operates out of the Caribbean to dodge tax. But the taxpayer also subsidises Virgin Rail £500 million a year.

The wealthiest individuals are also managing to escape their tax obligations. There are 54 billionaires living in the UK with a combined fortune of £126 billion, but in 2006 paid a mere £14.7 million in tax- a rate of 0.1%! If these fat cats were properly taxed we could afford all to pay for all the services we need and more!

But it's not just tax "avoidance" which is the problem. A huge amount of money is wasted on pointless projects - like subsidising the monarchy, going to war, the Orwellian ID card, all contribute to a long list.

The Trident nuclear missile programme is costing us £20 billion (the straight-up answer from the government) which is a monumental amount in itself for such a vile investment, and upwards of £97 billion if you look at the real costs in the small print.

And now for the biggie. £1.3 TRILLION spent bailing out the losses of the banking system when the recession hit us. This number is normally used in science to measure space and time, and is so enormously huge it's difficult to comprehend. But the important thing to note is that when they say there's no money for our services - it's because they spent that money on stockbrokers - so why not take it back?

We must make sure it is Trident or the bankers or the billionaires or the corporations who foot the bill for the country's debt - not us. We can fight back, through strikes, occupations and community campaigns. But to stop the main parties wielding the attacks we need to build a new anti-capitalist party that fights for the interests of ordinary people and against the very system - capitalism - that privileges the rich.

Thousands of students occupy Austrian universities

Roman, from Revo Austria speaks out

BY JOHN * SOUTH LONDON

A mass, direct action movement has broken out in Austria against planned attacks on the university education system.

It all started when The Fine Art Academy was occupied by a small number of students who were protesting at plans by the Austrian education ministry to introduce a three-tier degree system. Students were furious that many of them would be unable to access the higher 'masters' qualification and that their choice over what subjects to focus on would be dictated from above.

They called a solidarity demonstration to march to the main Vienna University, met by hundreds of students inspired to go into occupation to save their subjects. They gathered for a meeting and decided to occupy the largest theatre rooms on the main campus.

Roman, a member of REVOLUTION in Austria was part of the occupation at the University of Vienna at the moment it began and was elected onto the strike committee by a mass student meeting.

"It wasn't long before we realised the students' total determination to occupy for as long as necessary in order to win. The mood here is to do whatever it takes.. But we are prepared. We are now occupying the gym to provide us with more sleeping space and showers. The level of support has been incredible. We are overwhelmed with messages of solidarity, including an official message of support from the national union of steel workers who are currently in a dispute over pay. Students are overwhelmingly either in the occupation or supportive of it, even the right wing students. Teachers have been holding regular solidarity meetings as well as offering practical support. Lower paid casual and agency staff have been particularly enthusiastic."

But he added that the student union officials are now trying to start negotiations with the ministry although the plenary decided differently.

"They tried to call a press conference and then call for the ending of the occupation, but the students wouldn't have it. They have been ignoring the decisions of the mass student plenaries that have been held in the occupation. Now they are trying to negotiate with the Ministry of Education despite an explicit call from the plenary meetings not to do so. We won't let them go above our heads".

Roman said "The sheer scale and speed of this occupation means we need to improve our organisation if we are to deal with these issues. When we started the occupation, some people argued that organisations, like REVOLUTION shouldn't play a role in the occupation, and that there should be no leadership. The plenary meetings of many students (between 1000-2000 people in each) rejected this in arguing for an elected steering committee, but after opposition from mainly libertarian students, this was abandoned and now we have a committee of between 40-50 representatives of different work groups. Unfortunately it means we don't get much of an overall picture and anyone can go on the committee by forming a workgroup. This can make it a nightmare to organise sometimes! Elections would make situations like this easier to deal with and more democratic."

However Roman is confidant that this movement has potential to fight and win against the government attacks.

"We made an important decision yesterday, that we address our demands not just to the Education Ministry but against the Finance Minister too. We have been chanting 'Money for education – not banks!' on the demonstrations, making the link between the economic crisis and how we are being made to pay the price. In attacking decisions of the finance minister I hope we can broaden the protest out to government policy as a whole and show that the capitalist system is to blame.

The occupation is now spreading to universities all across Austria and is making links with different workers in struggle. We have sent messages of solidarity from the occupation to the steel workers and also print workers and staff at Kindergartens who demonstrated just two weeks ago for higher pay. Students at the university feel solidarity with others fighting the attacks that have come with the capitalist crisis."

REVOLUTION has been handing out leaflets to students throughout the occupation, arguing that capitalism is the problem. We aim to link up the struggles of university students with the Austrian school students who marched out of school in their thousands shouting anticapitalist slogans just a few months ago. As a next step, REVOLUTION is arguing for an elected coordinating committee, to draw in delegates from all the occupied universities and the schools if they come out on strike. With the time and organisation of university students in conjunction with the radicalism of the schools, the Austrian capitalists had better step down or prepare for battle!

Organise, occupy! Fight for the right to work

★BY MIKE ★ LEEDS★

There are now 2.47 million people unemployed in the UK (7.6%). That's an increase of 88,000 in the last three months. Youth unemployment now stands at 946,000. 1 in 6 young people (aged 16 to 24) are also classified as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). This is 100,000 more than at the same time in 2008. The government, predictably, wants to cut this by a measly 2% by next year. To put the icing on the cake, both the minimum wage and unemployment benefit discriminate against youth - the younger you are, the less you get.

What figures show is how ordinary working people - and young people in disproportionate numbers - are being made to pay for the economic crisis.

Let's put this in perspective. The banks were bailed out to the tune of a cool €1.5 trillion (that's a million-million). The total NHS budget is €100 billion and the education budget €60 billion. So that's what the government is willing to do for the rich - spend taxpayers' money on a bailout for their rotten, anarchic system which cannot provide for basic human needs, only private profit.

All the mainstream political parties are planning massive cuts, with the Conservatives saying Labour's plans aren't going far enough! This open attack on workers and youth is forcing more and more people to fight back, like the Vestas wind turbine blade workers, who bravely occupied their factory against closure by profit-hungry bosses, as well as the Leeds bin workers who are currently taking indefinite strike action. These militant tactics need to be broadened out and continued, with solidarity committees in every town and city linking together struggles against job and pay cuts. These can be coordinated committees of action that can say outright 'we won't pay for their crisis!' We need an unemployed workers union that can occupy job centres to demand decent benefits for those thrown on the scrapheap. Youth must take a leading role in this, as they are affected enormously. Pressure must be put on the union leaders to recruit young people and fight the job cuts. If they won't fight with us, then we can fight without them where necessary.

All in all, we need a working class solution to the crisis and an anticapitalist alternative to Labour, which is now the servant of the fat cats. This can be a new anticapitalist party, fighting every job and pay cut, organising against and linking up struggles up and down the country, as well as a force to confront the fascists on the streets and far beyond the ballot box.